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18

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MR GOODALL  
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MR FEARN

MR POWELL, NO 10 DOWNING ST

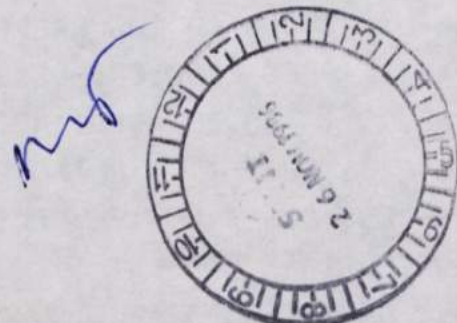
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MODUK SIC A2A  
MY TELNO 2933AND TELECON DUS(P)/KERR : PROPOSAL FOR THE ELIMINATION OF BALLISTIC MISSILES

SUMMARY

1. EXACT PRESENT STATUS OF THE PROPOSAL UNCLEAR, BUT THE CAMP DAVID DEAL STILL HOLDING. JCS REPORT POSTPONED FROM END-DECEMBER TO END-JANUARY. EVIDENCE ON THE HILL BY THE JCS CHAIRMAN GIVES SOME CLUES AS TO THE REPORTS LIKELY CONTENT.

DETAIL

2. FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENT'S 18 NOVEMBER SPEECH (TUR), THE US PRESS ARE SHOWING SIGNS OF CONCLUDING THAT THE ELIMINATION PROPOSAL HAS INDEED BEEN PUT ON THE BACK-BURNER, AFTER CAMP DAVID. NO OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN SAID SO IN SPECIFIC TERMS, AND ON THE RECORD, (THOUGH ADELMAN SAID IT OFF THE RECORD TO CORRESPONDENTS ON 19 NOVEMBER) UNTIL ADELMAN TOLD THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 24 NOVEMBER THAT THE PROPOSAL HAD BEEN QUOTE DE-EMPHASISED UNQUOTE. ON THE OTHER HAND, PERLE TOLD THE SAME COMMITTEE ON 21 NOVEMBER THAT THE PROPOSAL REMAINED AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION AND ADMIRAL CROWE (CHAIRMAN, JCS) TOLD THE COMMITTEE ON

REMAINED AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION AND ADMIRAL CROWE (CHAIRMAN, JCS) TOLD THE COMMITTEE ON 25 NOVEMBER THAT THIS WAS ALSO HIS UNDERSTANDING. BUT THE PRESS APPEAR TO REGARD SUCH STATEMENTS AS LARGELY PRO FORMA, GIVEN THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS FORMALLY TABLED IN GENEVA LAST MONTH. SHULTZ'S REFERENCE ON 17 NOVEMBER (OUR TELNO 2930) TO RETAINING SOME BALLISTIC MISSILES, AFTER MOST HAD BEEN ELIMINATED, IS STILL SEEN AS INDICATING SOME BACKING-AWAY FOR THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL AND HAD APPARENTLY BEEN APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT.

3. OUR WORKING-LEVEL ADMINISTRATION CONTACTS BELIEVE THAT THE CAMP DAVID QUOTE PRIORITIES UNQUOTE ARE LIKELY TO STICK AS ADMINISTRATION POLICY (THOUGH OSD OF COURSE CAVIL AT CW); THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT HOWEVER TAKE ELIMINATION OFF THE GENEVA TABLE SINCE THIS WOULD PROVOKE FURTHER SOVIET ACCUSATIONS OF BACK-TRACKING FROM REYKJAVIK; AND THAT WE NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT THAT, FOR THE RUSSIANS WON'T PICK IT UP.

4. THE DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF THE JCS STUDY OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL (OUR 5 NOVEMBER SIGNAL TO MODUK) HAS SLIPPED FROM END-DECEMBER TO END-JANUARY. AN INTERIM REPORT IS TO BE MADE IN THE WEEK BEGINNING 4 DECEMBER, BUT OSD TELL US THAT IT WILL NOT BE SUBSTANTIVE, WILL NOT CONTAIN ANY CONCLUSIONS AND WILL ONLY DESCRIBE THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY. CONCLUSIONS,

5. ON THE SUBSTANCE, CROWE CONFIRMED IN HIS HASC EVIDENCE ON 25 NOVEMBER, THAT THE JCS HAD AGREED AT THE TIME OF THE PRESIDENT'S 25 JULY LETTER TO GORBACHEV THAT THE ELIMINATION OF BALLISTIC MISSILES WAS A GOOD QUOTE ABSTRACT UNQUOTE IDEA. BUT THEY HAD NOT THEN ANALYSED IT IN ANY DETAIL. THEIR INITIAL 7 DAY STUDY IMMEDIATELY AFTER REYKJAVIK HAD RAISED SOME CONCERNS ABOUT THE PRECISE 10-YEAR TIMESCALE, BUT THE PRINCIPLE OF ELIMINATION REMAINED A GOOD ONE: THE SOVIET ICBM THREAT WAS THE GREATEST THREAT FACING THE US AND THERE WOULD BE GREAT BENEFIT IN REMOVING IT. CROWE HOPED THAT THE PROPOSAL COULD NOW BE QUOTE FLESHED OUT UNQUOTE SO THAT IT COULD BE PURSUED WITHOUT DAMAGE TO US AND WESTERN SECURITY INTERESTS. THE JCS STUDY WOULD LOOK AT DIFFERENT WAYS OF QUOTE RESTRUCTURING UNQUOTE DETERRENCE WITHOUT BALLISTIC MISSILES. THE MAIN TASK WOULD BE TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE NEW US STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCE POSTURES THAT WOULD ACHIEVE THIS. NATO IN ANY CASE NEEDED TO IMPROVE ITS CONVENTIONAL POSTURE, AND THE NEED MIGHT BECOME GREATER IF THE US STRATEGIC NUCLEAR POSTURE CHANGED. BUT ADJUSTMENTS IN THE US POSTURE, BOTH NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL, COULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE.

#### COMMENT

6. CROWE WAS CAREFUL NOT TO APPEAR TO DISAGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT OR CHALLENGE THE VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO ELIMINATE BALLISTIC MISSILES. IT REMAINS OUR VIEW THAT THE JCS REPORT IS

OR CHALLENGE THE VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO ELIMINATE BALLISTIC MISSILES. IT REMAINS OUR VIEW THAT THE JCS REPORT IS UNLIKELY TO DO SO. THEIR ANSWER TO THE PRESIDENT'S QUESTION IS LIKELY TO BE NOT A FIRM NO, BUT RATHER A QUALIFIED QUOTE YES, BUT ... UNQUOTE.

7. THEY MAY WELL REPORT THAT THE ELIMINATION OF BALLISTIC MISSILES OVER A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD WOULD BE BOTH DESIRABLE AND FEASIBLE AS LONG AS THE US AND THE ALLIES WERE PREPARED TO PAY PRICE: RESTRUCTURING THE US STRATEGIC DETERRENT (STEALTH TECHNOLOGY, ETC), INVESTING IN NEW AIR-DEFENCE, AND ANTI-SUBMARINE CAPABILITIES, AND POSSIBLY ALSO IMPROVING NATO'S CONVENTIONAL DEFENCES IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE. ONE OF THE ASSUMPTIONS TO WHICH THE JCS HAVE BEEN TOLD TO WORK IS THAT THE US DEFENCE BUDGET WILL GROW AT 3 PERCENT A YEAR THROUGH TO 1996 (WHICH HARDLY SEEMS REALISTIC): BUT ONE OF OUR SOURCES BELIEVES THAT THEY WILL ARGUE THAT THE PRICE OF MAINTAINING DETERRENCE WITHOUT BALLISTIC MISSILES WOULD REQUIRE EVEN STEEPER GROWTH. THE STUDY MAY ALSO CONCLUDE THAT 10 YEARS IS TOO SHORT A PERIOD FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL (BUT THIS POSSIBLE RESERVATION DID NOT EMERGE CLEARLY FROM CROWE'S TESTIMONY ON 25 NOVEMBER).

8. CONCLUSION. THE CAMP DAVID DEAL ON PRIORITIES IS HOLDING REASONABLY WELL: THE NEXT INDICATOR WILL PRESUMABLY BE THE FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS TO US MEMBERS OF THE NAC AND DPC COMMUNIQUE-DRAFTING GROUPS. WE STILL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME FOR CONSIDERING POSSIBLE SUBSTANTIVE INPUT INTO THE JCS STUDY: BUT WE SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT THE JCS WILL READILY ACCEPT OBJECTIONS BASED ON GENERAL DETERRENCE THEORY, AS DISTINCT FROM SPECIFICALLY EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES AND PROGRAMME/ COST ARGUMENTS, AGAINST THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL, OR BE WILLING TO OPPOSE IT IN PRINCIPLE, AS DISTINCT FROM ADDING PRACTICAL CAVEATS.

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